



# NEWS

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## **Illinois Conservation Foundation Announces 2014 Conservation Achievement Scholarships**

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Conservation Foundation today announced the recipients of the 2014 Conservation Achievement Scholarships. These prestigious awards were given to Kenneth Bielski, a senior at Hononegah High School in Rockton and Alex Handel, a senior at Sycamore High School. Each student will receive a \$2,000 award to apply to specified expenses at the two- or four-year college or university of their choice.

“The Conservation Achievement Scholarships allow the Illinois Conservation Foundation to recognize and reward some of the outstanding natural resources stewardship efforts being conducted by young people in our state,” said Marc Miller, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Conservation Foundation.

Kenneth Bielski demonstrated conservation leadership by volunteering at the Hoo Haven Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, the Welty Environmental Center and the Natural Lands Institute. He has worked on projects to educate adults and children as well as performing natural lands restoration and wildlife rehabilitation activities.

Alex Handel is dedicated to preserve and protect the Illinois environment. He is a “Leave No Trace” trainer and volunteers with the Russell Woods Forest Preserve and the Kishwaukee Watershed Management Program. He has participated in prairie seed collections and restorations, tree-planting activities, trails work, educational efforts and community planning.

“The 2014 scholarship applicants demonstrated great work in preserving and enhancing a sustainable outdoor Illinois environment, but our two winners were exceptional examples,” Miller said. “Their volunteer efforts over several years showed initiative and highlighted their leadership skills while making positive differences in the environment. I congratulate both students.”

The Conservation Achievement Scholarships have been awarded since 2005. In the 10 years of this program’s existence, 59 scholarships worth a total value of \$90,000 have been distributed. Generous donations to the Illinois Conservation Foundation from numerous organizations and individuals make this program possible.

Applicants for the Illinois Conservation Foundation's Conservation Achievement Scholarship program must be outstanding high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. Other criteria also apply. Detailed instructions and the application form can be accessed at <http://www.ilcf.org/scholarships>. Please contact the Illinois Conservation Foundation at 217-785-2003 or [dnr.icf@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.icf@illinois.gov) for more information or to make a donation to support the Conservation Achievement Scholarships.